

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands
St. John-Allagash Region Management Plan
Public Scoping Meeting
August 30, 2017 6:00 – 7:30 PM
BPL Northern Region Office, Ashland ME

MEETING MINUTES

The Public Meeting was attended by approximately 20 people.

The following BPL staff members were present: Vern Labbe, Northern Region Lands Manager; Matt LaRoche, AWW Superintendent; Jim Vogel, Plan Coordinator; David Pierce, Forester; Jacob Guimond, Forester; Brien Boucher, Forester; Chet Condon, Forester; Nate Webb, MDIF&W biologist assigned to BPL.

Welcome/Introduction

Jim Vogel welcomed the attendees, and asked Bureau staff to introduce themselves. A meeting agenda was provided (attached).

Presentation

The meeting was structured around a PowerPoint presentation given by Jim Vogel, which began with background information on the purpose and scope of the Bureau's regional management plans, on the St. John-Allagash Region as defined for the Plan, and on the relationship of the public reserved lands to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. The presentation then provided an overview of each of the Bureau's Public Reserved Lands that will be addressed by the Plan, beginning at Gero Island/Chesuncook Lake and proceeding northward. An opportunity was given at several points in the presentation for the attendees to make comments and ask questions, as reflected in the following record.

Public Comments/Questions and BPL responses, when given (paraphrased from notes)

Gero Island/Chesuncook Unit

- No comments

Telos, Chamberlain, and Round Pond Units

- *Cathy Johnson, Natural Resources Council of Maine*: New road to shorten hiking trail to tramway should be gated at the 1 mile mark from AWW.

Smaller Lots in and adjacent to the town of Allagash

- *Steve Young, Upper St. John River Organization*: Marten require large blocks of habitat, with at least $\frac{3}{4}$ in pole stage or larger. Should maintain these lots to this standard.

- *Hilton Hafford, Ashland ME*: Deer are present in many parts of the public lots even outside the P-FWs and the lots should be managed accordingly.
- *Steve Young, Upper St. John River Organization*: BPL should try to maintain species composition and hardwood inclusions to promote overall stand stability. Fir is a good deer food source and should be maintained.
 - BPL responded that past management has pushed many stands towards hardwood; BPL is trying to move these stands back to a more normal state, given the landbase.

General comments and questions (not specific to one unit)

- *Cathy Johnson, Natural Resources Council of Maine*: According to statute [AWW statute; MRS Title 12, Chapter 220, subchapter 6, section 1877], lands acquired adjacent to the waterway should become part of the AWW.
 - Brief discussion followed about what the intent of the statute actually is. Example: does this apply to the entire Round Pond Unit? Lock Dam may be an example of a parcel that was recently acquired and is part of the waterway. [BPL will consult with the Attorney General's office for clarification on this question.]
- *Steve Young, Upper St. John River Organization*: Universal statewide habitat classifications exist (NETHCS) and should be applied to this planning process. NRCS has a qualitative assessment that includes forest development stages. Should strive to maintain a comprehensive system to track and model habitat.
- *Hilton Hafford, Allagash ME*: Does the abutting landowner impact how harvesting is done on BPL land? (e.g., if an abutting owner clearcuts their property, does that change harvesting plans for the BPL lands?)
 - Northern Region Manager Vern Labbe providing brief response on how harvesting is directed on public reserved lands, incorporating both silvicultural and wildlife habitat goals, which are not directly responsive to what occurs on the abutting lands.
- *Steve Young, Upper St. John River Organization*: Using hand crews in HMAs [Habitat Management Agreement areas] should be considered, especially in cedar stands.
- *Rep. John Martin*: Priestly fire tower should be replaced. (BPL responded that it is not on Public Lands)

Additional Public Feedback/Questions:

- Does BPL do habitat modelling?
 - BPL response: Just starting, hopefully will do more in the future.

- Is BPL fully roaded now?
 - BPL response: No, however some roads are closed to motorized access in order to maintain current levels of access. Ecological Reserves will never be roaded. May end up closing more management roads if the budget to maintain them isn't sufficient.

- Does BPL have an integrated pest management (IPM) policy?
 - BPL response: Using Phodar/Lidar to investigate insect damage and determine canopy closure. Monitoring budworm. Pursuing a budget for budworm spraying, which would be focused on deer yards.

Next Steps

- Attendees were advised that the Advisory Committee will be convened in the next month or so to start discussing plan development and that the public is welcome to attend the meetings and comment. It was also announced that updates, meeting notices and documents will be posted on the plan website.

Concluding Comments

- Jim Vogel reminded attendees of the opportunity to provide written comments over the next three weeks, and that an email and mailing address to submit comments are provided on the bottom of the meeting agenda.
- The meeting was concluded with a thank you to all who attended.

Written Comments submitted during 3-week comment period (ending 9/20/17)

- Twelve individuals submitted comments by email between August 31 and September 20. A summary of the comments is attached to these minutes; the originals will be posted on the plan webpage.

Attachment 1: Meeting Agenda

Attachment 2: Summary of Written Scoping Comments



St. John-Allagash Region Management Plan

Public Scoping Meeting

August 30, 2017

6:00 to 8:00 pm

BPL Northern Region Office, Ashland ME

Agenda

- 6:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 6:10 Presentation, part 1: management planning and the St. John-Allagash Region, relationship to AWW
- 6:30 Presentation, part 2: Gero Island and Chesuncook Units; public questions and comments
- 6:50 Presentation, part 3: Telos, Chamberlain and Round Pond Units; public questions and comments
- 7:45 Presentation, part 4: Smaller Lots; public questions and comments
- 7: 55 Concluding Comments

You may send **written comments** with your thoughts on management of the St. John-Allagash Region public lands **by September 20 to:**

Jim Vogel
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
OR
Jim.Vogel@maine.gov

The webpage for the St. John-Allagash Region Plan can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/stjohn-allagash>. This page will be updated with draft plans and announcements about upcoming meetings and written comment periods.

Attachment 2 - St. John-Allagash Region Plan: Summary of written scoping comments

3-week comment period: 8/30/17 to 9/20/17

#	Date	Form	Commenter	Summary of comments
1	8/31/17	Email	Leah LaRoche	Supports recreation enhancements related to Allagash and Round Pond Mountain fire towers, and expanded boat and trail access to Webster Lake. Also, supports modification of harvesting in deer yards, with more but smaller harvests vs single large harvests.
2	8/31/17	Email	Reid Anderson (Kieve-Wavus Outdoor Education organization)	Supports improved access trail and hand launch and additional group campsites at Webster Lake. Supports rehabilitation of Allagash Mountain and Round Mountain fire towers and addition of interpretive information at the towers.
3	9/7/17	Email	David Ramsey	Supports public access boat launch at Webster Lake.
4	9/8/17	Email	Gordon Kramer, MDIF&W Fisheries Biologist	Supports increased angler access at Webster Lake. Follow-up comments on 9/18 specified support for a small trailerable launch facility, suitable for 12-16 ft. boats and square stern canoes, and parking for 5+ vehicles with trailers, which he believes is compatible with IF&W's fisheries management of the lake.
5	9/8/17	Email	Gary Willhide	General comments in support of more emphasis on low-impact recreation and less on logging. Supports more non-motorized trails, non-motorized boat access, and backcountry campsites.
6	9/14/17	Email	Rick Hesslein	General comments advocating for management of lands as wilderness / sanctuary, with no hunting, trapping or engines allowed.
7	9/14/17	Email	Ted Wolfertz	Supports additional campsites and trailered boat launch at Webster Lake, to meet the needs of those who are not looking for "ultra-primitive recreation but are looking to be remote."
8	9/17/17	Email	Paul Sheridan	General comments advocating for management of lands as wilderness: no hunting, logging, fishing, trapping, agriculture, or motorized vehicles allowed.
9	9/18/17	Email	Russell Scott	Supports smaller harvest to benefit deer, and a boat launch site on Webster Lake.
10	9/18/17	Email	Val Philbrick	Advocates for managing the region as a "pristine wilderness area."
11	9/20/17	Email	Elaine Tselikis	General comments and questions regarding wildlife management/protection, hunting, timber management, and non-motorized and motorized recreation management.
12	9/20/17	Email	Esther Mechler	[Comment submitted as follow-up to phone conversation with Jim Vogel, BPL] General comments in opposition to hunting.